

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

10 A.M.

INTRODUCTION

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be God, the one who forms us, ✝ Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

Congregation (C) Amen.

P Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

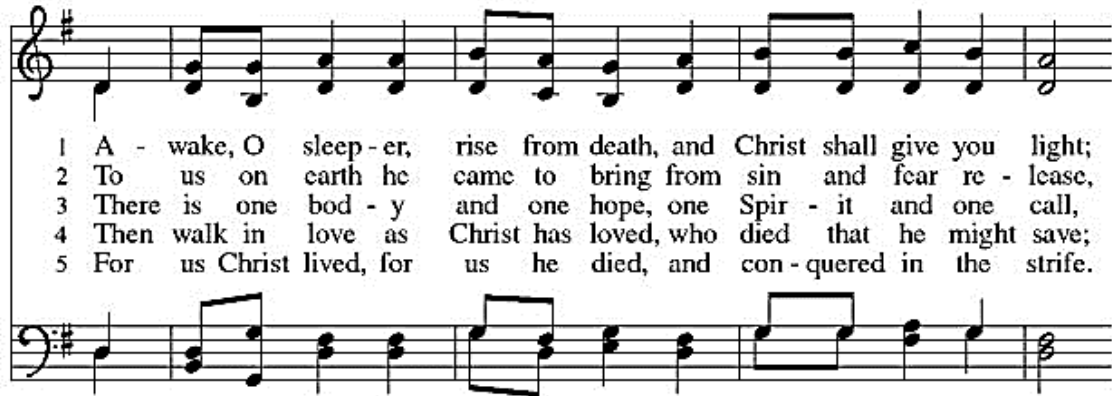
P Steadfast and faithful God,

C you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

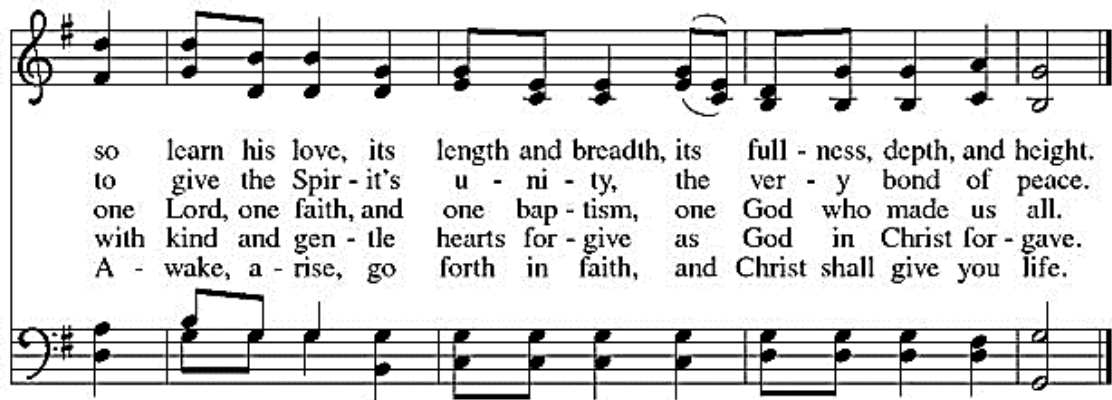
P Beloved in Christ,

God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In ✝ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.

C Amen.



1 A - wake, O sleep - er, rise from death, and Christ shall give you light;
 2 To us on earth he came to bring from sin and fear re - lease,
 3 There is one bod - y and one hope, one Spir - it and one call,
 4 Then walk in love as Christ has loved, who died that he might save;
 5 For us Christ lived, for us he died, and con - quered in the strife.



so learn his love, its length and breadth, its full - ness, depth, and height.
 to give the Spir - it's u - ni - ty, the ver - y bond of peace.
 one Lord, one faith, and one bap - tism, one God who made us all.
 with kind and gen - tle hearts for - give as God in Christ for - gave.
 A - wake, a - rise, go forth in faith, and Christ shall give you life.

Text: F. Bland Tucker, 1895-1984

Music: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1784-1829

Text © 1980 Augsburg Publishing House. admin. Augsburg Fortress.

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion
 Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Refrain

Congregation:

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

The musical score is written on five staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 3/8 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics 'Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,' are aligned under these notes. The second staff continues with quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4. The lyrics 'all of cre - a - tion sings for joy' are aligned under these notes. The third staff starts with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics 'to the God of life and love and' are aligned under these notes. The fourth staff continues with quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics 'free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -' are aligned under these notes. The fifth staff concludes with quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics 'er - more!' are aligned under these notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Text and Music: Marty Haugen; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

Verse 1

Congregation or Congregation 1:

1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once
slain, whose blood has freed and u -
nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of
God. *to Refrain*

Verse 2

Congregation or Congregation 2:

2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and
might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ
for ev - er. *to Refrain*

Verse 3

Congregation:

3. For God has come to dwell with us, to
make us peo - ple of God; to make
all things new. *to Refrain*



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13

We sing the psalm in response to the first reading.



Leader [1]Bless the LORD, | O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's | holy name.

C [2]Bless the LORD, | O my soul,
and forget not | all God's benefits—

L [3]who forgives | all your sins
and heals all | your diseases;

C [4]who redeems your life | from the grave
and crowns you with steadfast | love and mercy;

L [5]who satisfies your desires | with good things
so that your youth is renewed | like an eagle's.

C [6]O LORD, you provide | vindication
and justice for all who | are oppressed.

L [7]You made known your | ways to Moses
and your works to the chil- | dren of Israel.]

C [8]LORD, YOU ARE FULL OF COMPAS- | SION AND MERCY,
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love;

L [9]you will not al- | ways accuse us,
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.

C [10]You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,
nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.

L [11]For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear you.

C [12]As far as the east is | from the west,

so far have you removed our transgressions from us.

L ¹³As a father has compassion for his children,
 so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

Spoken after the Psalm is sung:

C Amen.

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

R The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.’”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY **716** *Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace*



1 Lord of all na - tions, grant me grace to love all
2 Break down the wall that would di - vide thy chil - dren,
3 For - give me, Lord, where I have erred by love - less
4 Give me thy cour - age, Lord, to speak when - ev - er
5 With thine own love may I be filled and by thy



peo - ple, ev - 'ry race; and in each per - son may I
Lord, on ev - 'ry side. My neigh - bor's good let me pur -
act and thought - less word. Make me to see the wrong I
strong op - press the weak. Should I my - self the vic - tim
Ho - ly Spir - it willed, that all I touch, wher - e'er I



see my kin - dred, loved, re - deemed by thee.
sue; let Chris - tian love bind warm and true.
do will cru - ci - fy my Lord a - new.
be, help me for - give, re - mem - b'ring thee.
be, may be di - vine - ly touched by thee.

Text: Olive Wise Spannaus, b. 1916, alt.
Music: BEATUS VIR, *Samotulský Kancionál*, 1561
Text © 1969 Concordia Publishing House.

APOSTLES' CREED

A Let us confess our faith.

C I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each petition ends: Merciful God,

Congregational response: receive our prayer.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

The people greet one another with the sign of Christ's peace.

The assembly stands.



+ MEAL +

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

ANTHEM

"Sing of the Lord's Goodness" - Sands/Inwood

Sing of the Lord's goodness, Father of all wisdom,
come to him and bless his name.
Mercy he has shown us, his love is forever,
faithful to the end of days.

(Refrain)

Come, then, all you nations, sing of your Lord's goodness,
melodies of praise and thanks to God.
Ring out the Lord's glory, praise him with your music,
worship him and bless his name.

Power he has wielded, honor is his garment,
risen from the snares of death.
His word he has spoken, one bread he has broken,
new life he now gives to all. (refrain)

Courage in our darkness, comfort in our sorrow,
Spirit of our God most high;
solace for the weary, pardon for the sinner,
splendor of the living God. (refrain)

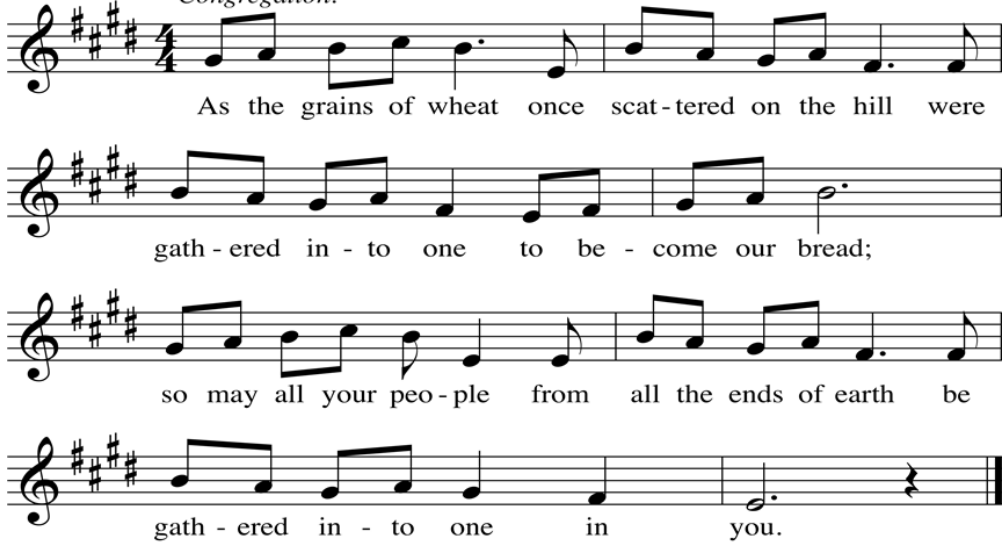
Praise him with your singing, praise him with the trumpet,
praise him with the lute and harp;
praise him with the cymbals, praise him with your dancing,
praise God til the end of days. (refrain)

OFFERING HYMN

The assembly stands to sing the offering hymn as the collection and the gifts are brought forward.

Refrain

Congregation:



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath - ered in - to one to be - come our bread;
so may all your peo-ple from all the ends of earth be
gath - ered in - to one in you.

Verses



1. As this cup of bless - ing is shared with-in our midst
2. Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when
may we share the pres - ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

to Refrain

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Congregation:

The musical score is written on five staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first staff begins with a 6/8 time signature. The second staff changes to 3/8 time. The third staff changes to 6/8 time. The fourth and fifth staves remain in 6/8 time. The lyrics are: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est! Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and
might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!
Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

The presiding minister continues to give thanks.

P In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it,
and gave it to his disciples,
saying: Take and eat;
this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

C Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

The assembly is seated.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

C **Amen.**

+ SENDING +

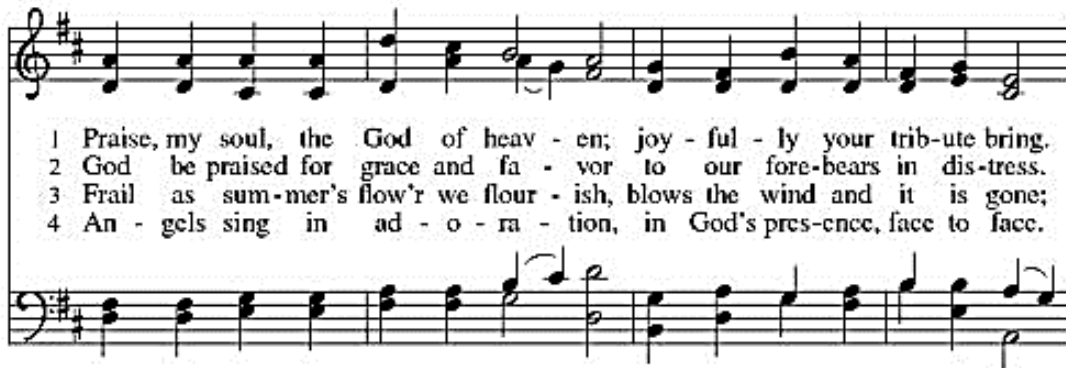
BLESSING *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P The God of glory, ✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

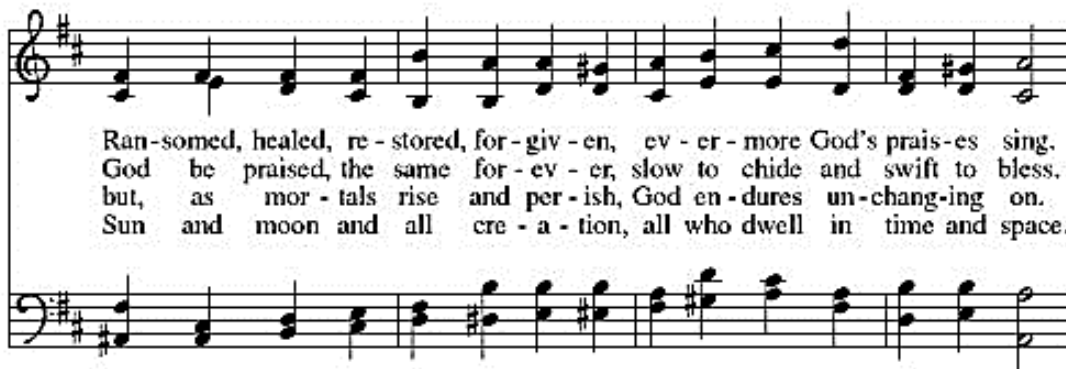
C **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING HYMN **864** *Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven*



1 Praise, my soul, the God of heav - en; joy - ful - ly your trib-ute bring.
 2 God be praised for grace and fa - vor to our fore-bears in dis-tress.
 3 Frail as sum-mer's flow'r we flour - ish, blows the wind and it is gone;
 4 An - gels sing in ad - o - ra - tion, in God's pres-ence, face to face.



Ran-somed, healed, re - stored, for-giv - en, ev - er - more God's prais-es sing.
 God be praised, the same for - ev - er, slow to chide and swift to bless.
 but, as mor - tals rise and per - ish, God en - dures un - chang - ing on.
 Sun and moon and all cre - a - tion, all who dwell in time and space.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Prais - es ev - er - last - ing ring!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Glo - rious is God's faith - ful - ness!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise the great E - ter - nal One!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise with us the God of grace!

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793–1847; alt. Walter R. Bourman, 1927–2005
 Music: PRAISE, MY SOUL, John Goss, 1800–1880


DISMISSAL

- A We believe out loud that God’s mission for us is:
C **to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God’s call.**
- A Go in peace. Go in peace. Share the harvest.
C **Thanks be to God!**

+ + +

Sundays and Seasons v.20220805.1416

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	<p>SUSAN WARREN DEDICATES TODAY’S ALTAR FLOWERS IN GRATITUDE FOR KATHARINE & KARL’S MUSICAL TALENTS, WHICH THEY SO WILLINGLY SHARE WEEK AFTER WEEK.</p>
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<u>Calendar for September 17 - 24</u>				
Sep.	17	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
	20	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice
	24	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

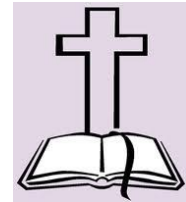
Next Sunday, Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost:

[Jonah 3:10--4:11](#)

[Psalm 145:1-8](#)

[Philippians 1:21-30](#)

[Matthew 20:1-16](#)



SERVING TABLE		
Serving	September 17	September 24
Presiding	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Preaching	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Assisting Minister	Kirsten Ebbesen	Colleen Holdcraft
Cup Minister	Audrey Post	Kirsten Ebbesen
Lector	Chris Reece	Jen Reece
Tech Team	Audrey Post Cindy Suhrweir	Caroline Collins Jonas Holdcraft
Altar Guild	Linda Eshleman Lawana Lamb-Daniels Sandy Lamb-Daniels Barbara Sullivan	
Counters	Kirsten Ebbesen Rob Schiffer	Margaret Bowers Patricia Handschy
Announcements	Denise Bookwalter	Denise Bookwalter

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Laura Ketchum-Jahn, (friend of Cheryl & Steve), diagnosed with breast cancer. Steve Walits (cousin of Rob Schiffer), hospitalized after a serious accident.

For the sick: Val Sullivan; Audrey Post; Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Don Dowd; Isabelle Taylor (granddaughter of Bill & Connie Taylor), being treated for rheumatoid arthritis and Primary Immunodeficiency; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Dan Graney (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White).

In treatment for cancer: Gordon Fleischer; Stephanie Barber; Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Maggie Soff (friend of Sandy Sampson); James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Bruce Blubaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); Chris Dickman (synod council member); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve).

Health and protection: For all affected by the coronavirus – especially those experiencing mental-health difficulties due to isolation, those struggling to recover from the disease, those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personnel, EMTs), the millions of unemployed people, etc.; for the unaccompanied children entering the U.S., including those “unaccounted for.”

For prisoners: All those on Death Row.

Other concerns: For Karen Olson; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Angela Locke (friend of Audrey Post), for patience and strength; Becky Button (cousin of Audrey Post), as she continues to recuperate; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing.

Church concerns: St. Stephen’s Church Council; the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council; all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all people suffering and/or recovering from hurricanes; migrants and asylum seekers; civil rights for people around the world; a ceasefire in Ethiopia and in Ukraine; peace in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWER CHART FOR 2023: Do you have an anniversary, birthday, or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service by signing up for the 2023 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$35, and you can place it in the offering plate.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: Want to read a sermon you missed? Visit <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>.